

# Food for Thought



Health Promotion Newsletter

November 2017

## Avoid Holiday Weight Gain

If you are like me, too much splurging on Thanksgiving often sets off a domino effect for the rest of the holiday season. Instead of embarking on a six-week food fest, take control and jump start your motivation for a [healthy and active holiday season](#).

### Plan a post-meal walk

Plan to take a walk after your Thanksgiving meal. A brisk walk will help burn some calories and will put you in the right mindset to turn down a second helping of pumpkin pie. Most likely some of your friends and family will want to join you!

### Walk around and talk to people

Rather than obsessing over the food at Thanksgiving, sampling each and every appetizer before dinner, walk around and catch up with family and friends.

### Plan a workout date the next morning

Instead of feeling bloated and lethargic the day after Thanksgiving, schedule a fitness date with a friend.

### Volunteer to help clean up

Instead of picking at the leftovers or helping yourself to a second or third dessert, offer to help the host clean up. This will physically remove yourself from the table and will help draw your attention away from the food.

### Stop eating when you are full

Thanksgiving is one of those holidays when people plan to eat until they are stuffed to the brim. Instead, serve yourself a small amount of everything you want, with no restrictions, but only have enough to satisfy your stomach without overdoing it.



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## Diabetes Awareness Month

Diabetes is one of the leading causes of disability and death in the United States. One in 10 Americans have diabetes, which is more than 30 million people. Another 84 million adults in the United States are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes. In Gwinnett, Newton, and Rockdale almost 65,000 live with diabetes.



Every **23 seconds**, someone in the U.S. is diagnosed with diabetes.

Depending on your age, weight, and other factors, you may be at higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes. The good news is that making healthy changes can greatly lower your risk. To help prevent type 2 diabetes:

- Watch your weight
- Eat healthy
- Get more physical activity

To raise awareness about diabetes and healthy living, GNR is proudly participating in American Diabetes Month.

# Fight Holiday Stress

The shopping crowds, back to back diet-busting parties, and over-bearing in-laws can make it easy to not feel so wonderful during the most wonderful time of the year. That's why we've rounded up [a few ways](#) to help you avoid the seasonal blues and stay happy, healthy, and energized:

- **Spend time outdoors.** It stimulates the production of serotonin - boosting your mood.
- **Go for a walk.** The rhythm and repetition of walking has a tranquilizing effect on your brain - it decreases anxiety and improves sleep.
- **Fit in exercise.** Going for a run or hitting the gym can actually make you feel better - workouts can boost your mood for up to 12 hours.
- **Savor a spicy meal.** Hot foods trigger the release of endorphins - the natural chemicals that trigger feelings of euphoria and well-being.
- **Eat breakfast before coffee.** Caffeine on an empty stomach can cause blood sugar levels to spike, which can cause attention problems and irritability.
- **Turn up the tunes.** Hearing music you love can relax blood vessels and increase blood flow.
- **Use lemon or orange essential oils.** Citrus fragrances boost feelings of well-being.
- **Go tech free.** Constant cell phone buzzes keep us in a perpetual fight-or-flight mode due to bursts of adrenaline, contributing to mounting stress levels.
- **Forget perfection.** Stop obsessing over doing it all and don't sweat the small stuff - your holiday will be so much more enjoyable!
- **Don't overschedule.** Remember it's okay to slow down a bit.

## Spice Things Up

New research supports the surprising health benefits of these spice-rack regulars. Sprinkle some healthy fairy dust into your fall recipes.

### Ginger

Known for its tummy soothing properties, ginger is also linked to boosting satiety, which may lead you to eat less. Add to sauces and dressings for that extra kick.

### Black Pepper

Helps protect the cells that line your GI tract, improving gut function. Plus new research links it to helping reduce risk of colon cancer, so sprinkle liberally.

### Turmeric

Linked to reducing oxidative stress on vascular tissues that can increase risk of chronic disease. Use it in veggie stir-fries for a taste of South Asia.

### Cumin

A chemical compound in this spice protects cell function and has been linked to reduced risk of breast cancer. Good for goosing up plant based dishes like lentils and veggie chili.



## Recipe of the Month



### Healthy Sweet Potato Bake

#### Ingredients

- 3 ½ lbs. sweet potatoes
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 2 tbsp. maple syrup
- ¾ tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- ½ tsp. ground cloves
- 1/8 tsp. nutmeg
- 2 tbsp. orange juice
- ½ tsp. orange zest

#### For the Pecan Topping

- 1 cup whole raw pecans
- 1 tbsp. coconut oil, melted
- 1 tbsp. maple syrup
- ¾ tsp. cinnamon

#### Method

1. Preheat oven to 400 F. Pierce the sweet potatoes with a fork and place them on a baking sheet. Bake for 60 - 90 minutes, until soft. Turn the potatoes over once during baking.
2. Once the potatoes are cool, use a knife to peel. In a large bowl, mash the peeled potatoes.
3. Mix in the coconut milk, maple syrup, salt, cinnamon, ground cloves, nutmeg, orange juice, and orange zest.
4. Place the sweet potato mixture in a 2-quart baking dish.
5. In a small bowl, mix pecans, coconut oil, maple syrup, and cinnamon. Arrange on top of casserole.
6. Reduce oven to 350 F and bake for 20-25 minutes.

Questions? Contact Me.

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